FEDERATION



PAPER OF INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF IRAQI REFUGEES-IFIR ISSUE 13

Urgent Action: Stop the Violence Against Demonstrators in Kurdistan

We ask you to write to the Kurdistan Regional Government's offices in Europe and Erbil to demand:

an end to the arresting of activists and protestors and the release of all those currently detained;

the removal of the PUK and KDP militia from the streets of the cities and that those responsible for the shooting of protestors, and those who ordered the shootings, are brought to justice.

In addition, we ask you to support the demands of the uprising for an end to political corruption, for decent work and public services such as water and electricity, and for political freedom, including freedom of assembly, speech and thought.

Contact: Kurdistan Region Presidency

Post to: Kurdistan Region Presidency, Diwan, P.O. BOX

60, Iraqi Kurdistan, Erbil-Iraq: **Fax to:** 00964 66 223 5505 :

KRG office in London: :Fax to: 00442071704301



We would be grateful if you could send us a copy or let us know that you have sent to them. We feel that your support would increase the pressure on the ruling parties to respect the rights of protestors.

Uprising in Iraqi Kurdistan

Dashty Jamal secretary of IFIR (originally published by Red Pepper magazine)

On 17th February, inspired by the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, people came onto the streets of Sulaymaniyah, the second biggest city in Iraqi Kurdistan, to demand freedom, dignity, justice and basic services and an end to political corruption. Since then demonstrations have continued for more than 60 days, with people across the region supporting the demands.

They are protesting against the two parties which have ruled Kurdistan for the past two decades. After the uprising against Saddam Hussein in 1991, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), led by Jalal Talabani, and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), led by Massoud Barzani, took control of the country, and, after a civil war between them ended in stalemate, divided it between them and have jointly ruled it ever since While they have been warmly received by western governments, keen to present Iraqi Kurdistan as an example of the success of their policy towards Iraq, they have enriched themselves and their parties as they have split Kurdistan's resources and wealth between them Talabani and his PUK followers take a cut of everything that goes through the south-east of the country, while Barzani and his KDP enjoy the same in their north western fiefdom. Government positions are exchanged to maintain this mutually beneficial consensus



: Talabani is President of Iraq, Barzani president of Kurdistan. The current Prime-Minister is from the PUK, while the President of the Parliament is from the KDP. Two years ago it was the other way round. This continues down through everyday Kurdish life - getting a job in the public sector mostly relies on membership of one of the parties, depending on where you are for example — and opportunities for backhanders are increasing as more and more multinational companies enter the country, especially interested in the oil under its lands. Both parties owe their power to support from the US,<<<continued on page 7

Unions and campaign groups support the uprising in Kurdistan

Thursday, 31st March 2011 Kurdistan Region Presidency, Diwan, P.O. BOX 60, Iraqi Kurdistan, Erbil-Iraq

Dear Sir



I am writing to you on behalf of the 100,000 food and agriculture workers in Unite, Britain's largest trade union.

The people of Kurdistan have begun a movement for freedom, justice, jobs and services, and against political corruption. They have started civil demonstrations for their just cause.

Our members in the UK are shocked at the reaction that has taken place against these people who are simply exercising their human right to campaign on these issues that are so important to them and their families.

I would ask you to intervene as a matter of urgency to stop the killing and arresting of protestors and to ensure that those responsible for ordering the shootings are brought to justice. In addition, we ask you to support the demands of the protestors for an end to political corruption, for decent work and public services such as water and electricity and for political freedom, including freedom of assembly, speech and thought.

Yours sincerely

Jennie Formby National Officer Food, Drink and Tobacco Sector

Amnesty International report on 12 April about human rights violations

http://www.amnesty.org.uk/ news_details.asp?NewsID=19394

PUBLIC & COMMERCIAL SERVICES UNION



Dear International Federation of Iraqi Refugees (IFIR),

17 February massacre

The DCLG PCS branch sends you its support in your campaign against the violence of the

Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) against the demonstration in Sulaimaniya on 17 February and the continuing occupation of KDP militia in cities across Kurdistan.

The 17 February demonstration was part of a wave of protests against corrupt and undemocratic regimes across the whole region. By their violent response the Kurdish authorities have put themselves in the same category as Mubarak, Ben Ali, and Qaddafi.

We support your statement calling for the Kurdish Regional Government: to:

- * put on trial the militia responsible for the murder of the people killed on the
- 17 February;
- * For an end to the occupation of all Kurdish cities by the KDP militia:
- * For the immediate release of all the people who have been arrested in connection with 17

February protest.

Yours in solidarity,

Karen Johnson

Branch Secretary

Morning Star newspaper reports on London actions in solidarity with the uprising

Kurds take fight to London embassy

http://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/ index.php/news/content/view/full/101398



London Coalition Against Poverty

Mobile: 07932 241737 Office: 0207 247 6101 londoncoalitionagainstpoverty@gmail.com

Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London, E1 7QX

Statement of support for the struggle for freedom and justice in Iraq and Kurdistan

To our friends in Iraq and Kurdistan

We send you our support and solidarity in your fight for freedom, jobs and justice.

We condemn the Iraqi and Kurdistan Regional Government's brutality and their killing and kidnapping of protestors. They are following the same path as the Mubarak and Ben Ali regimes and will surely meet the same fate.

The brave actions of all those protesting across Iraq are a source of inspiration to us, and we will take courage from your fight against oppression and injustice.

We condemn the British Government's support for the ruling parties in Iraq and Kurdistan and their oppressive rule just as we opposed their war against your country. The UK Governmen does not represent the progressive forces in the UK

We support all the demands of Freedom Umbrella group and wish you success in your fight for justice.

London Coalition Against Poverty

Scottish Socialist Party

15.3.11

Dear Sir,

I am writing on behalf of the International Committee of the Scottish Socialist Party to express our opposition to the killing and arrest of those protestors who demonstrated in Kurdistan, especially in Sulaimanyah City, on February 17th, in solidarity with the revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia.

We call on you to initiate action to bring both those responsible for the shooting of protestors, and those who ordered the shootings to be brought to justice. In addition, we ask for you to support the demands of the protestors for an end to political corruption, for decent work and public services such as water and electricity, and for political freedom, including freedom of assembly, speech and thought.

We look forward to a speedy response to our call and request.

Yours, Bill Bonnar,

Convenor, International Committee, Scottish Socialist Party scottishsocialistparty@googlemail.com

18 March 2011

Dear International Federation of Iraqi Refugees (IFIR),

17 February massacre

No Sweat sends you its support in

your campaign against the violence of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) against the demonstration in Sulaimaniya on 17 February and the continuing occupation of KDP militia in cities across Kurdistan.

The 17 February demonstration was part of a wave of protests against corrupt and undemocratic regimes across the whole region, and by their violent response the Kurdish authorities have put themselves in the same category as Mubarak, Ben Ali, and Oaddafi.

We support your statement calling for the Kurdish Regional Government: to:

- * Put on trial the militia responsible for the murder of the people killed on the
- 17 February;
- * For an end to the occupation of all Kurdish cities by the KDP militia;
- * For the immediate release of all the people who have been arrested in connection with 17 February protest. Yours in solidarity,

Vicki Morris

For No Sweat

24 February Switzerland Demonstration



IFIR Swiss branch with the following Groups and political party; Gorran, WCPI, WCPK Swiss branches and CHAK held a demonstration in Berne supporting the demands of the uprising in Kurdistan. The groups wrote a statement to the KRG and American embassy supporting the demands of the demonstrators in Kurdistan (see page 1 for full list of the demands)

Actions against the Sweden government's forcible deportation policy

An action group against deportation blockaded one of the detention centres near Gothenburg city on 6 April to stop the deportation of 30 Iraqi refugees to Baghdad.

On the 10th April Campaign against Racism Fascism held the demonstration in Gothenburg to defend the right of refugees and against forcible deportation.

Action group against deportation held a picket in front of Gothenburg court to support of fifteen detained activists.



IFIR wrote to the court to support the activists

Your honour,

We are writing to support those 15 activists who are being tried in court today. We believe they were acting with honourable motives for a just cause.

The guilty party is the forcible deportation policy being pushed by their government, who, by continuing with this policy, is making Sweden look like it does not care about human rights.

We also note that as they are being tried today, the Swedish Government is deporting 50 people back to Baghdad, an unsafe city, from which people will again try to escape for fear of their lives.

On behalf of the International Federation of Iraqi Refugees, we humbly submit our support for the not guilty plea of the fifteen people on trial today, and believe their actions were justified as they were trying to prevent a great crime from happening.

Regards



IFIR supporting these actions to Against forcible deportation by Moderat Government in Sweden and ask all human rights organisations, trade unions, political party and civil society groups to put pressure on the Swedish government to stop returned people by force'

For mor information about these activity in Sweden and the pictures see this links:

http://www.flickr.com/photos/44504239@N03/ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FK1tHt2X_P0 http://svtplay.se/v/2385696/

rattegang mot sagasendemonstranter

http://www.gp.se/gptv?path=gptv.abcdn.net%2FTV-**ARKIV%**

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http://www.goteborgsfria.nu/artikel/87607

http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?

programid=104&artikel=4442452

http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?

programid=2493&artikel=4443946

http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?

programid=2493&artikel=4439737

http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?

programid=2200&artikel

http://www.flickr.com/photos/44504239@N03/

http://www.flickr.com/photos/44504239@N03/page2/

http://www.flickr.com/photos/44504239@N03/page3/

http://www.flickr.com/photos/44504239@N03/page4/

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_UAvdKc9BA

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4lXIcDqfKmo

http://tv.expressen.se/nyheter/inrikes/1.2397498/

kaosartat-vid-demonstration-i-goteborg

http://gt.expressen.se/nyheter/1.2397280/tumult-

utbrot-vid-sdu-demonstration/

Sweden to Attempt Mass Deportation of Iraqi Refugees

At least 30 Iraqi refugees are to be deported from Sweden on Wednesday 4th May. Among those on the flight to Baghdad are several families.

Across Europe, governments are forcibly returning hundreds of people to Iraq. They claim that Iraq is a safe country to live and work in. But demonstrations across the country to demand jobs, electricity, clean water and an end to political corruption, have been violently repressed in the last months.

In Iraqi Kurdistan, 10 people have been killed by militia groups from the ruling parties, since demonstrations began in February. Hundreds more have been injured, arrested or disappeared. Cities across the region have been militarised, with thousands of armed groups from the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan occupying the streets and today, any attempt to mark International Workers Day has been banned in Kurdistan. Despite this, European governments have continued to support the Iraqi and Kurdistan regional governments, and have continued to deport people to the area.

'This mass deportation and all attacks on Iraqi people in Europe and Iraq must be stopped' says Dashty Jamal, Secretary of the International Federation of Iraqi Refugees. 'We demand that the Swedish government cancels this flight and releases all those detained immediately. All European governments must put an end to this repressive policy' Many of those who have been returned who left to escape persecution have been forced to live in hiding, changing their names and regularly moving addresses to avoid being found and killed. Some of those who have been deported have committed suicide.

Political pressure on the Kurdistan Regional Government forced them to stop accepting deportations directly to the region last year. Now those identified as Kurdish, are forced to travel from Baghdad to Kurdistan, despite the dangers this involves.

Dashty Jamal says 'We call on all human rights organisations, trade unions and civil society groups to put pressure on the Iraqi government to stop accepting people who are returned by force'

Stop Deportation Flight to Iraqi

Stop agreement with EU countries that plays with the lives of Iraqi refugees

Deportation flights to Iraq resume despite UN warning

Asylum seekers have been returned to Baghdad after a temporary suspension of repatriation flights

Owen Bowcott

Guardian.co.uk. Wednesday 9 March 2011

The first group deportation of Iraqis for six months has seen a number of asylum seekers returned to a country convulsed by civil rights protests and violence.

The decision to resume charter flights was in defiance of warnings by the <u>United Nations</u> high commissioner for refugees that it is unsafe to remove people to Baghdad and central <u>Iraq</u>.

The plane, organised by the UK Borders Agency in conjunction with the Swedish government and the EU border agency Frontex, left Stansted airport at 7am on Wednesday. Last-minute appeals on behalf of other failed asylum seekers prevented several others from being forcibly repatriated. It is not known how many deportees from Sweden were on board.

Link to the full article:

http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/mar/09/deportation-flights-iraq-resume

Mass deportation to Iraq planned next week as attacks on demonstrators throughout country continue

As anti-government demonstrations continue across Iraq the UK Government plans to deport refugees back to Baghdad next week. More than 25 people, including one Christian, have been arrested, detained in detention centres across the country and have been given deportation tickets for a charter flight leaving on Wednesday 9th March.

More than 29 people have been killed and hundreds injured as government security and militia forces have shot at demonstrators in both Iraqi and Kurdistan Regional Government controlled cities, and tried to prevent them going out to demonstrate. (see, for example, http://

 $\underline{www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/}\\ \underline{article/2011/03/04/AR2011030401061.html})$

Barzan Tofiq, from Kirkuk, told the International Federation of Iraqi Refugees, "I ran away from a terrorist group. I have no family there now. I've been living peacefully here in Dover. They tried to send me back before but I put scissors in my mouth and cut it so they couldn't send me, I was so scared. If I go back it's dangerous for me: the terrorist group is still there. I ask people in the UK to support me and to stop this flight leaving."

Lokman Abdul, from Halabja in Kurdistan told the IFIR: "I have been here for 11 years. My wife has British citizenship. I am a film-maker and a writer. I lost most of my family in the gas attack on Halabja by Saddam Hussein. Because of the films and articles <<<< continued on page 8

Valentine's Day celebration



International Federation of Iraqi refugees (IFIR) hosted an evening concert of poetry, music and song for Valentine's Day on the 9th of February 2011. The celebration was started with Hiwa Kadir reading a poem accompanied by music played by Zana Arash and Sozan Mama. The audience enjoyed the atmosphere of the poems and music.

The second part of the celebration was filled with music and songs performed by Mansoor Eezat, Aram Taha and Samal Darwish. The occasion was celebrated by music and songs of harmony.

The third part of the commemoration of Valentine's Day filled with music and great dancing. Furthermore, during the joyful event, IFIR gave red roses to all the participants of the evening.

IFIR condemns the deportation of Iranian refugees from Kurdistan to Iran

According to news from the "No to Deportation Campaign "from Kurdistan, Iranian refuges face the risk of deportation after they protested against the Iranian authority headquarter in Erbil Kurdistan and also participated in the current uprising in Iraqi Kurdistan. With the general crackdowns by the Kurdistan Regional Government, a number of Iranian refugees have been deported to Iran and some others are being detained and are due to be deported. Such action by KRG is playing politics and trading people's lives. The KRG clearly knows that anyone who disagrees with the Iranian authorities will face torture and even execution. IFIR strongly condemns the policy of deportation by the KRG to Iran. We demand an immediate freeze of deportations from the KRG.

Statement of support for Iranian hunger strikers

IFIR and the Coalition to Stop Deportations to Iraq supports the demands of the six Iranians on hunger strike in protest at plans by the British government to forcibly return them to Tehran

Solidarity with the uprising in Kurdistan International Womens Day



On Saturday 12th of March IFIR and the Kurdistan and Middle East women's organization held a solidarity night celebrating international women's day and the 17th February uprising in Kurdistan. One of the demands of the uprising was equal rights for Kurdish Women.

Prshng Ahmed welcomed everyone to the meeting. Sawsan Salim from KRWO and Dashty Jamal from IFIR spoke about the story of 8thof March. They highlighted the situation of women in Iraq and Kurdistan. They spoke about the tragedy of the violence against women and the violation of women rights.

They also spoke about Women in Europe. They ended their speeches pledging their solidarity with the brave women in Kurdistan and the uprising. They spoke about how must women led the uprising alongside men and fight for equality for all.

The Following the speeches there was music and dancing.

The six protesters participated in demonstrations against the Iranian regime in 2009 and their lives will be in danger if they are deported to Iran. Across Europe, hundreds of Iranians are threatened with deporation. Many of them are detained in immigration prisons. While European governments condemn the Iranian regime for abuses of human rights, they continue to deport Iranians. Many of those forcibly returned have been tortured and imprisoned. IFIR and CSDIraq supports the demands of the protesters and the right of all people to live without fear of deportation or detention in immigration prisons. We call upon all human rights organisations, trade unions, civil society groups and supporters to take action in support of the protesters.

Sign the petition here:

http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/save-6-uk-hunger-strikers-from-deportation/sign.html#se

<<<fr>from page 1 Uprising

who preferred them to the genuinely popular uprising that first forced Saddam out in 1991, and they have always been happy to go along with the lie that the 2003 war was for the benefit of the Kurdish people.

While this goes on the majority of people in Kurdistan suffer from mass unemployment and lack basic services. Women continue to be treated as second class citizens. Polygamy continues to be accepted and discrimination against women is widespread.

People have running water for one hour every two days and electricity seven hours a day. Infrastructure is crumbling and hospitals lack medicine and services.

Any dissent is punished severely by the parties' militias, police and security forces, all of which operate according to their own agendas. Political and human rights activists have been killed and opposition parties banned. The media is heavily censored and those who step outside of these restrictions often pay a heavy price: last year for example Sardasht Osman, a journalist, was murdered by KDP militia for writing an article critical of Barzani and his family's riches. Even though he was abducted in broad daylight in front of hundreds of witnesses, no-one has been brought to justice for his murder. It is an open secret that elections are unfair and undemocratic: the PUK and KDP have made a pact not to stand against each other in their respective fiefdoms and people are threatened with loss of employment and food entitlements if they do not vote the right way. Opposition activists are arrested and detained. During the last election I was handing out leaflets criticising the PUK and the KDP in Sulaymaniyah when PUK militiamen stopped me and my two comrades, told us we were "making propaganda" and took us to the local jail for a few hours to make their point. The uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt encouraged people into action against this. There had been protests against the PUK and KDP before (even though a law was passed earlier this year banning demonstrations not sanctioned by the authorities) but the strength shown by people and workers in Egypt and Tunisia provided extra inspira-

Repression against the demonstrations started immediately and has been severe. On the 17th February, 500 of the demonstrators, mostly young men, moved away from the main demonstration to protest directly outside the KDP's offices. To scare them away, KDP militia took to the rooftops and started throwing stones at the demonstrators, one of whom was hit and knocked to the ground, blood flowing. The demonstrators responded with their own stones and the militia in turn responded with their guns, killing three young men. Repression has continued daily: activists have been arrested, kidnapped; some even had acid thrown in their faces by thugs sent by the government. One journalist critical of the regime woke up to find his car burnt out. In total nine people have been killed, including two children and more than 200 injured. Videos of the shootings, filmed on mobile phones and circulated on the internet to undermine the attempts of the KDP and PUK controlled media to brand the demonstrators trouble-makers can be found here and here.

The protests grew and people have continued to come out



wherever possible onto the streets of cities and towns across Iraqi Kurdistan demanding change (less so in the capital Erbil and in the north-west, where the KDP have stopped people attending demonstrations outright by keeping the militia on the street constantly and closing the university). The main square in Sulaymaniyah has been renamed freedom square and people regularly sleep in it to keep it occupied. The demands of the demonstrators have become more radical, moving from demands for freedom, better services and an end to corruption, to the immediate resignations now being called for. Tahir Hassan, an activist who has been demonstrating every day said last week: "people in Kurdistan don't just want to change the faces [of their rulers]. They have a problem with the whole system."

But not a single demand of the uprising has been met and state brutality is increasing as the PUK and KDP remain, for the most part, free from international censure. The UK government has so far stayed silent, sticking to the western line that, since Saddam Hussein was forced out 20 years ago, Iraqi Kurdistan has become the model democracy for the rest of the Middle East to follow. The recent report by the UK's All Party Parliamentary Group on Kurdistan, for example, celebrated its, "visible and dynamic economic, political and social progress" and called it "a major success story." The report proves nothing other than the extent to which the group have been seduced by Talabani and Barzani. Its 19 pages, containing lavish praise for the achievements of the KDP and the PUK were written by the group's administrator, Gary Kent, who, it turns out, is a paid employee of the Kurdistan Regional Government controlled by the KDP and the PUK! When a group of us involved in the Freedom Umbrella action group, which organises here in the UK in support of the uprising, went to parliament to make our grievances known, the police were called. Kent and his colleagues have been learning from his employers in Kurdistan.

The British support people in Kurdistan really want is from the people, not the government. International pressure was powerful in Egypt and Tunisia and people in Kurdistan are asking for the same support from freedom-loving people here. Come to one of our upcoming demonstrations or send a letter from your organisation, such as those already sent by the Unite and PCS unions.

<<<fre>from page 7 Uprising

We need the same level of solidarity that was shown against the Iraq war to be shown now for the uprising of the people of Kurdistan and Iraq.

People in Kurdistan are fighting for freedom, equality, dignity and social justice, just like people in Tunisia and Egypt, and just like people in the anti-cuts movement in the UK. We are all in the same fight, to change the capitalist system, to stop people like Talabani, Barzani and Cameron, and to give power to the people and the workers, and to build a human society.

Link to the original article : http://www.redpepper.org.uk/uprising-in-iraqi-kurdistan/

<<<fre>from page 5

Mass deportation to Iraq

articles I have been making here criticising the parties in the Kurdish government I won't be safe there. You can see what they do to people who criticise them: they kill them, like they have done in these last two weeks."

A statement from the International Federation of Iraqi Refugees and the Coalition to Stop Deportations to Iraq says:

"in the whole of Iraq people are demonstrating against injustice, corruption, repression, unemployment and lack of basic services and the Iraqi and Kurdish governments are responding with violence and killing. And yet the UK Government, while it is saying how much it supports democracy and human rights in Libya, continues to support the corrupt governments in Iraq and Kurdistan, and now is deporting people, many of whom left to flee this same government violence, into the middle of it! It is a criminal hypocrisy and must be stopped."

(Ends)

The Kurdistan Regional Government and the British Government are responsible for the death of Reko Rashid

It is with great sadness that we inform you of the death of Reko Rashid. Reko was a young Iraqi Kurd who had lived in the UK for eleven years. He was waiting for 11 years to gain the right to stay in the UK without success. Unfortunately on the 30 January 2011 Reko gave up this fight and hanged himself in his flat.

IFIR believes that both the Kurdistan Regional Government and the British Government are responsible for the death of Reko Rashid. The IFIR send condolences to Mr Rashid's family and his friends. IFIR pledges to continue to struggle and strongly fight to end the policy of forcible deportation. The IFIR continues fighting to bring freedom and equality to all, and calls upon all refugees and asylum seekers to join our struggle for freedom of movement for all.

IFIR has complained to the Home Office and demanded an investigation into why he was not kept informed of the progress of his case.

Editor: Dashty Jamal: 5th May 2011

www.federationifir.com

Deputy Editor: Karen Johnson

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Solidarity with Kurdish & Iraqi Refugees

Refugees Rights are Human Rights